UNITED
NATIONS

EP

UNEP/EA.1/4/Add.1

Distr.: General
12 April 2014

Original: English

United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme

United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme
First session
Nairobi, 23–27 June 2014
Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Policy issues: state of the environment

State of the environment

Support structures and processes for keeping the world environment situation under review, including progress on UNEP Live

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", provides strategic guidance on the key actions needed to advance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The present report reviews progress achieved by UNEP on these actions. In response to Governing Council decision 27/11, the report summarizes recent progress in the development of the UNEP knowledge management platform, UNEP Live. A proposal for a staged approach is presented for the production of the next report in the Global Environment Outlook series, GEO-6. The status of various assessment processes, platforms and networks is also reviewed, including the Global Sustainable Development Report, the United Nations World Oceans Assessment, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services, the Eye on Earth network, the Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA) and the Global Environment Monitoring System Water Programme (GEMS/Water). More detailed information on these initiatives is presented in various information documents.

* UNEP/EA.1/1.

K1400641 120514

I. Background

1. Assessment processes constitute the fundamental building blocks that support the core mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to keep the world environment situation under review. They must, however, be underpinned by credible science, institutional networks, partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaborative mechanisms, which provide a number of support functions, such as catalysing data flows, and facilitating access to and the sharing of environmental information. Collectively, these structures and functions support various levels of decision-making, from global to local, and set priorities for technology support and capacity-building interventions.

2. The outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", reiterated the importance of information access, data sharing, and the role of the Global Environment Outlook in bringing together information and assessment in support of informed decision-making.[1] In addition, the need to disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information and to raise public awareness on critical and also emerging environmental issues is highlighted in paragraph 88 (e) of the outcome document. The importance of technology support and capacity-building are emphasized in paragraph 88 (f).

3. "The future we want" contains five references (paragraphs 48, 76 (g), 85 (k), 88 (d) and 276) to the need to promote and strengthen the science-policy interface and, in paragraph 88 (d), UNEP is called upon to take action. In response to this request, a report on actions being taken by UNEP to strengthen the science-policy interface and to report on critical gaps is contained in the report of the Executive Director (UNEP/EA.1/2/Add.1).

4. The role of the Global Environment Outlook process in strengthening the science-policy interface is also cited in paragraph 88 (d). Since 1997, UNEP has published five reports in the Global Environment Outlook series. These reports have followed a two–five year cycle and the production process has been expensive, cumbersome and complex, with consequent difficulties in maintaining continuity from one report to the next. The development of the web-based platform UNEP Live presents an opportunity for a more dynamic approach by providing global services combined with regional, national and local data. These may be used to identify key and emerging environmental issues and to support the development of integrated assessments and policy analysis on the state of global, regional and local environments. A staged approach will therefore be adopted for the production of the sixth report in the Global Environment Outlook series, GEO-6. Although the Global Environment Outlook follows a five-year cycle, the establishment of the United Nations Environment Assembly provides an opportunity to provide direction on the production process and cycle of the Global Environment Outlook reports to ensure more frequent and regular updating. The present report presents an outline of this approach as applied to the production of GEO-6.

5. In response to Governing Council decisions 25/2, 26/2 and 27/11, UNEP is developing, in collaboration with a wide array of partners, a web-based knowledge management platform called UNEP Live to promote access to, and to use, environmental information in support of the core mandate of UNEP of keeping the world environmental situation under review.[2] The present report updates the progress made since the twenty-seventh session of the UNEP Governing Council in the development of UNEP Live.

6. Paragraph 85 (k) of "The future we want" refers to strengthening the science-policy interface in the context of the high-level forum, where one of its functions could be to strengthen the science-policy interface through a review of documentation bringing together dispersed information

[1] In paragraph 88 (d), member States call upon a strengthened and upgraded UNEP to promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environment Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making.

[2] In decision 25/2, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to elaborate further on the requirements for a migration to targeted assessments on thematic priority areas supported by a UNEP Live enabling framework and to report thereon to the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session in 2011. In decision 26/2, the Council requested UNEP, among other things, to present the pilot proof-of-concept phase of a UNEP Live platform consisting of an interactive web application with supporting data management capacities able to present historical near-real-time data and indicators on a limited number of environmental themes to the Governing Council at its twelfth special session, in 2012. In decision 27/11, the Council requested the Executive Director to implement the next phase of UNEP Live during the biennium 2014–2015 as an open platform in continued alignment with relevant environmental information systems designed for global, regional and national environmental assessment and data sharing.

and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments. Plans by UNEP to contribute to the planned global sustainable development outlook report are also outlined in the present document.

7. Currently, a number of parallel assessment processes, platforms and networking initiatives are under way which are complementary to UNEP Live and these are described briefly in the report with more detailed information provided in the following information documents:

(a) Note by the secretariat on the Eye on Earth initiative (UNEP/EA.1/INF/11);

(b) Note by the secretariat on the Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA) (UNEP/EA.1/INF/12);

(c) Note by the secretariat on the GEMS/Water programme: status report and pathways to the future (UNEP/EA.1/INF/13);

(d) Note by the secretariat on proposed procedures to enhance future assessment processes (UNEP/EA.1/INF/14).

II. UNEP Live

8. UNEP Live[3] is designed to support the United Nations Environment Assembly in keeping the environment under review. It serves as the organization's knowledge management platform, using global services combined with regional, national and local data to identify key and emerging environmental issues and to support the development of integrated assessments and policy analysis on the state of global, regional and local environments. It provides tools for data visualization, mapping and comparisons to enable users to combine data, create maps and publish and track the effective use of their findings.

9. The core principles of UNEP Live include, first, open access to data from a wide array of sources including governments, research programmes, civil society, communities of practice and traditional knowledge; second, the sharing of data once collected for multiple uses; third, responsible management of data and information at source; fourth, the archiving and tracking of the use of data and information; and, fifth, access by citizens to data and information through multiple means.

10. The foundations of the UNEP Live implementation programme are built on partnerships and networks to support policy analysis and assessments. UNEP works with countries and key partners within and outside the United Nations to build capacity, broker access to data and information and develop global regional and national perspectives. UNEP Live is being developed as a United Nations system-wide tool for tracking the effectiveness of United Nations environment-related activities, projects and investments around the world.

11. UNEP Live will support the monitoring, reporting and verification of data globally for countries and regions. In dialogue with UNEP member States, regional organizations and multilateral environmental agreements, these processes will be streamlined. UNEP Live will make available online national reporting toolkits to help governments collect, analyse and publish environmental information quickly and easily.

12. UNEP will organize regional user conferences in each region over the biennium to boost progress in data-sharing, knowledge-building and assessments, support technical development and capacity-building and facilitate environmental priority-setting.

13. A technical release of the UNEP Live platform took place on 16 January 2014 in Geneva, at the tenth plenary session of the Group on Earth Observations. The platform currently contains country and global statistics from the Statistics Division and the UNEP Environmental Data Explorer; charts and maps sourced from the United Nations and other sources; UNEP resources such as publications and links to the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) initiative, the United Nations information portal on multilateral environmental agreements (InforMEA) and UNEP project information.

14. It also highlights several areas of particular concern, including the Arctic region, and the air quality-health-climate change nexus, including links to live data and relevant resources. The first phase of the UNEP Live platform will include showcases on such topics as oceans, with analysis for climate prediction, regional seas, forest watch and the tracking of environmental change at key hotspots around the world.

[3] See www.unep.org/uneplive.

15. The "My UNEP Live" page includes access to base maps that allow users to add their own data and create charts and maps that can be saved and published.

16. During the first phase of the platform, countries will have the opportunity to store and publish data and to decide which data to make available through UNEP Live. This will be pilot-tested with three or four countries. During this phase, UNEP will be contacting countries, through the UNEP regional offices, to ensure that relevant and up-to-date information and data can be made available on the platform. The goal is to have all United Nations Environment Assembly countries active within UNEP Live by the end of the biennium 2014–2015.

III. Intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder processes, platforms and networks

17. Assessment processes constitute the fundamental building blocks that support UNEP in its core mandate of keeping the world environmental situation under review. The present section provides a status report on a number of processes, platforms and networks currently under development.

A. Multi-stakeholder assessment processes

18. The aim of a multi-stakeholder assessment process is to promote better decision-making by ensuring that the views of the main actors concerned about a particular issue are heard and integrated at all stages through dialogue and consensus-building. The process takes the view that everyone involved has a valid view and relevant knowledge and experience to contribute to the making of decisions. Stakeholders have a greater sense of ownership of the assessment. Legitimacy, policy relevance, saliency and credibility are core characteristics of an assessment. Transparent and rigorous peer review is necessary to ensure the highest possible level of scientific credibility.

1. GEO-6: process and production elements

19. Following Governing Council decision 27/11, the Secretariat is moving forward with a design that takes into account the recent progress in UNEP Live, the UNEP programme of work and budget, greater use of national, subregional and regional data, research and assessments, the availability of new environmental global data sets from the Group on Earth Observations, and the requirement for GEO-6 to be an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder process.

20. GEO-6 will report on the state and trends of the global environment, document progress towards meeting internationally agreed goals, provide an analysis of emerging issues and include examples of policy-relevant analysis. The report will draw on the findings of major global assessments, including the environmental assessment of small island developing States (GEO-SIDS); the Global Gender and Environment Outlook reporting process; the fourth report in the Global Biodiversity Outlook series; the Global Waste Management Outlook document; the Global Chemicals Outlook report; and the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the International Resource Panel (IRP).

21. GEO-6 will be produced through a staged approach. The first stage involves an undertaking by countries to publish their national data in UNEP Live, including developing capacity to report on environmental information; the second stage will include a global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation to agree on the objectives, scope and process for GEO-6 and the nomination of advisory bodies and experts; the third stage will comprise the production of regional assessments based on an intergovernmental multi-stakeholder process in each of the six UNEP regions; and the fourth stage involves the production of a global report overseen by an independent expert scientific advisory panel and an intergovernmental negotiated summary for policymakers developed by a high-level intergovernmental and stakeholder group. These stages will run partly in parallel to ensure the delivery of the key findings of GEO-6 in time for endorsement at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

22. The four key stages of the proposed process and production elements are outlined in table 1 below.

Table 1
GEO-6 production stages

Date	*Activity (2014, 2015, 2016)*
Stage 1	**Engagement of countries in UNEP Live**
January 2014 onwards	Deployment of national reporting toolkits and capacity-building using UNEP Live – for ministries working with UNEP to support open access to data and information, to produce indicators and assessments and to publish through UNEP Live.
Stage 2	**Consultation, nominations and advisory bodies**
April–September 2014	Nominations are invited from Governments and stakeholders for the independent scientific advisory panel, whose role is to guide the assessment processes to ensure the scientific credibility and data quality of the global report. Nominations are invited from Governments and stakeholders for experts in all relevant spheres (e.g., authors, data analysis, reviewers) to work on the regional assessments and the global report. Nominations are invited from Governments and stakeholders for the high-level intergovernmental and stakeholder group; the group will prepare the summary for policymakers to ensure policy relevance.
September 2014	Global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation: To agree on the scope, design, objectives of GEO-6. Includes Governments, major groups and stakeholders, and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.
Stage 3	**Regional consultations and production of GEO regional assessments**
2014–2015	Regional environmental information network meetings to build capacity for the GEO assessments and UNEP Live data and analysis platform: Tentative dates – Latin America and the Caribbean (2014); West Asia (2014); Asia and the Pacific (2015); Africa (2015); Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (2015); North America (2015); to coincide with key meetings of the relevant environmental information and observation networks. Preparation of regional assessments covering state, trends, outlooks, emerging issues and progress towards meeting internationally agreed goals. Conducted in line with regionally agreed priorities in relevant regional ministerial forums.
Stage 4	**Production of the global report and summary for policymakers**
October 2014–September 2015	Thematic inputs to the global report taken from the UNEP programme of work and external sources, including: Global Biodiversity Outlook; Global Gender and Environment Outlook; Global Waste Management Outlook; Global Chemicals Outlook; assessments of IPCC, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and IRP; World Oceans Assessment; protected areas monitoring coverage; adaptations gap pilot report; emissions gap; World Water Quality Assessment; regional black carbon assessments; global transboundary waters assessment of five water systems; global assessment report on disaster risk reduction. Preparation of the global report by nominated experts; elements to include: • Findings of the regional assessments • Integrated environmental assessment, relevant for policymakers • Analysis of progress towards meeting internationally agreed goals • Major emerging environmental issues • Gap analysis of data, information and assessments • Policy options

Date	*Activity (2014, 2015, 2016)*
September–December 2015	Intergovernmental review of the global report Scientific advisory panel to guide the process to ensure scientific credibility and data quality of the global report. Peer review of the global report to be undertaken by Governments and nominated experts. Peer-reviewed key findings made available for the summary for policymakers.
January 2016	High-level intergovernmental and stakeholder group meeting to prepare a summary for policymakers based on key global findings.
March 2016 open-ended CPR	GEO-6 summary for policymakers presented for discussion and negotiation.
June 2016 UNEA 2	GEO-6 key findings presented to the United Nations Environment Assembly.
June–December 2016	Production of the global report and associated products, translation, and outreach.

23. The cost of producing GEO-6 is estimated at $7 million, of which $4.3 million is expected to come from core funds and $2.7 million from extrabudgetary sources. The main cost components are outlined in table 2 below.

Table 2
GEO-6 budget
(United States dollars)

Activity (2014, 2015, 2016)	*Cost*
Intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation	450 000
Scientific advisory panel	150 000
High-level intergovernmental and stakeholder group	150 000
Content development	1 000 000
Six regional networking conferences	1 500 000
Capacity development	750 000
Country data flows and indicators delivered and published through UNEP Live	2 000 000
Production, translation, outreach, communication	1 000 000
Total	**7 000 000**

24. In order to improve the transparency, legitimacy and scientific credibility of GEO-6, peer reviews of all outputs, including the regional assessments and global analyses and reports, will be undertaken through intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder processes. Building on best practices, the secretariat will develop a set of transparent procedures, in particular with regard to administrative processes, the selection of participants, and the inclusion of diverging viewpoints and government and peer reviews, to support the production of regional and global assessments.

25. The secretariat will seek nominations from Governments and invite relevant stakeholders to present names of experts for the high-level intergovernmental and stakeholder group responsible for the summary for policymakers and for the scientific advisory panel set up to oversee the preparation of the regional assessments and global report. As GEO-6 products will be targeted at key audiences, it is essential that all outputs be translated into all the official United Nations languages.

2. Global sustainable development report

26. Paragraph 85 (k) of "The future we want" indicates that the high-level forum could strengthen the science-policy interface through the review of documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments. UNEP will contribute to the production of this report by:

(a) Ensuring that environmental sustainability is fully integrated;

(b) Assisting with a review of relevant existing assessments and dispersed information;

(c) Providing reliable, relevant and timely data through UNEP Live;

(d) Assisting with policy analysis;

(e) Mobilizing experts and centres of excellence to assist with the drafting of text and rigorous peer review;

(f) Ensuring that assessment products arising from the Global Environmental Outlook reports are made available to the experts assembling the global sustainable development report.

3. World Oceans Assessment

27. The regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, currently referred to as the World Oceans Assessment, is being undertaken in accordance with the implementation modalities endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 65/37 in response to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects. With the secretariat (the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea) and member States implementing the first integrated assessment cycle (2010–2014), UNEP has continued to provide technical and scientific support to the process in the following areas:

(a) Communication: initial support for the creation of a communications portal for use by the group of experts and member States;

(b) Assessments: sharing its extensive knowledge gained through the Global Environment Outlook process and in the development of integrated assessments;

(c) Capacity-building: support to member States in the World Oceans Assessment in the organization and facilitation of regional workshops through the platform of the regional seas conventions and action plans;

(d) Resource mobilization: engagement with potential donor countries to support the World Oceans Assessment.

28. For the first cycle of the process, six regional workshops have been held through the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans to identify capacity-building needs for the World Oceans Assessment in Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific, the Western Indian Ocean region, the Pacific region, Europe and the South Atlantic region. Capacity-building needs have been identified for each region in terms of the conduct of integrated assessments and the accessibility of data. UNEP is assisting the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in aligning their state of the marine environment reports to the outline of the World Oceans Assessment in order to forge synergies between regional and global processes.

29. The Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme, a project coordinated by UNEP and funded by the Global Environment Facility under its International Waters Portfolio, is in its second phase (2013–2014). Recognizing the value of transboundary water systems and the fact that many of them continue to be degraded and managed in fragmented ways, the Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme aims to provide a baseline assessment to identify and evaluate changes in transboundary water systems caused by human activities and natural processes, and their consequences for dependent human populations. It consists of five independent, indicator-based assessments (groundwater, lake basins, river basins, large marine ecosystems and the open ocean) and the linkages between them, including their socioeconomic and governance-related features. The indicators provide the scientific bases for classifying the ecological status of transboundary water bodies within each water system from least to most degraded, and the vulnerability of dependent human populations to multiple stressors from least to most vulnerable.

4. World Water Quality Assessment

30. The aim of the World Water Quality Assessment[4] is two-fold: first, to identify current and future problem areas of freshwater quality in surface waters, especially in developing countries; and second, to evaluate policy options for addressing water pollution. The assessment includes a concerted effort with the UNEP Global Environment Monitoring System for Water (GEMS/Water) Programme to extend the existing water quality database to track progress in protecting surface waters, and also to test and use models to evaluate policy measures. The assessment will be carried out in two stages. The first stage (June 2013–May 2015) will set the scene and comprise a preliminary assessment of the current global water quality situation in freshwater bodies using existing data and information. It will identify the data and knowledge gaps to be filled in the next stage of the assessment. The assessment's goals for the first stage are to review the state of water quality in rivers, lakes and reservoirs, in particular in developing countries, with an emphasis on public health issues and the status of the freshwater fishery; and to identify areas already under serious threat from water pollution. The first stage of the assessment is being carried out by the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) and the Centre for Environmental Systems Research at the University of Kassel, Germany, together with UNEP, under the umbrella of the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanism for all freshwater and sanitation-related matters, UN Water.

5. Global Gender and Environment Outlook

31. UNEP has convened an expert scoping consultation meeting on the Global Gender and Environment Outlook to support the preparation of a project document. At the consultation participants discussed the objectives, scope and process for the development of options to be considered in designing and planning the assessment. It is anticipated that the assessment will be launched at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in 2016.

6. Environmental assessment of small island developing States

32. UNEP is developing an environmental assessment of small island developing States (GEO-SIDS), for all three small island developing State regions, with the use of UNEP Live. UNEP will populate UNEP Live with data on small island developing States, and prepare the GEO-SIDS assessment organized around needs and solutions in an e-book format, to be launched at the third international conference on small island developing States, to be held in September 2014 in Apia.

7. Global Biodiversity Outlook

33. The fourth report in the Global Biodiversity Outlook series (GBO-4) will be a midterm review of implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and of progress towards the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It will draw upon the latest global indicator information from the Convention and related scenarios and modelling work to provide a picture of recent trends and likely trajectories. It will also draw upon the fourth and fifth series of national reports to the Convention and on the work of the High-level Panel on the Global Assessment of Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, which is being undertaken concurrently. It will address such issues as current progress towards attainment of each of the Aichi Targets and the implications for biodiversity in 2020 and for achieving the Convention's Vision for 2050. It will also discuss the relevance of biodiversity in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals.

34. The draft executive summary and technical report for GBO-4 are being prepared for review by parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, prior to the eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in June 2014. GBO-4 will be launched at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in the Republic of Korea in October 2014. The GBO-4 assessment process is being coordinated by the Convention secretariat, working with input from a team of international scientists who are preparing the underlying technical report, to serve as the basis for the GBO-4 report itself. A GBO-4 advisory group, selected through a nominations process, is providing guidance.

8. Global Waste Management Outlook

35. In response to UNEP Governing Council decision 27/12 on chemicals and waste management, the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) and the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) are developing the Global Waste Management Outlook, an authoritative reference document addressing the global challenges, trends, financial models and policies across the waste sector. The document will focus on the waste management process, placing waste management

[4] See the World Water Quality Assessment homepage at www.ufz.de/index.php?en=32318.

in the context of such processes as sustainable consumption and production, prevention and minimization and resource efficiency, and trace links to wider environmental policy challenges. It will provide a global analysis and guidance for national policies, in particular in developing countries. It will also cover the policies and instruments in use for waste management and include economic arguments in order to make the business case, addressing the cost of inaction and reviewing win-win situations. The outlook will be developed through a multi-stakeholder process.

B. Platforms

1. UNEP Live

36. The UNEP knowledge management platform, UNEP Live, is described in section II above.

2. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

37. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services[5] was established in April 2012, and currently has 115 member States. The platform is an independent, intergovernmental body, open to all member countries of the United Nations. UNEP provides secretariat services for the platform, which operates from Bonn, Germany.

38. At its second session, held from 9 to 14 December 2013 in Antalya, Turkey, the Plenary of the Platform adopted a number of key decisions, including:

(a) An initial work programme for the next five years, with strong commitment to its implementation demonstrated by a pledge of $25.4 million of the total $43.5 million required. The work programme deliverables include capacity-building, knowledge-generation, assessment and policy support. The conceptual framework of the Platform was also adopted;

(b) Procedures for the nomination and selection of the multidisciplinary expert panel, whose members will be selected for a three-year period at the next session of the Plenary;

(c) A collaborative partnership arrangement with UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which aims to provide a framework for collaboration between those four United Nations bodies and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, by representing the environment; the sciences and education; food and agriculture; and development and capacity-building;

(d) Financial rules for the platform, including agreement that UNEP would establish and manage the Platform trust fund.

C. Networks

1. Eye on Earth

39. As stated in paragraph 76 (g) of "The future we want", one important aspect of strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development is to promote and facilitate access to reliable, relevant and timely data in areas related to the three dimensions of sustainable development. Paragraph 274 highlights the role of the Eye on Earth network and the Global Earth Observing System of Systems in developing environmental monitoring systems. In its capacity as a "network of networks", however, the Eye on Earth network is an evolving initiative that needs to be regionalized, building on the existing core group of global and regional stakeholders.

40. The communities participating in the first Eye on Earth User Conference in Dublin, from 4 to 6 March 2013, adopted the Dublin Statement, defining the role of the Eye on Earth network: "To facilitate the sharing of environmental, societal and economic data and information, provided by the diversity of knowledge communities, to support sustainable development".

41. At the Conference in Dublin it was also agreed to establish the Eye on Earth Alliance, comprising institutional stakeholders that subscribe to the principles enshrined in the 2011 Eye on Earth Summit Declaration and share a common agenda centred on the achievement of the goal articulated in the Dublin Statement. The alliance will serve as the driving force behind the formation of the broader Eye on Earth network referred to in paragraph 274 of "The future we want". The common agenda of the alliance and the network will address such issues as:

[5] See www.ipbes.net.

(a) Enhancing the availability and accessibility of data and information across the three pillars of sustainable development;

(b) Providing data for the computation of indicators that will measure progress towards the achievement of targets under the sustainable development goals;

(c) Promoting the role of citizen science for environmental observation and monitoring;

(d) Implementing Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;

(e) Underpinning the development of UNEP Live with a global network of data and information providers.

42. The second summit meeting of the Eye on Earth network will be held in Abu Dhabi in 2015. Further information on the network may be found in the note by the secretariat on the Eye on Earth initiative (UNEP/EA.1/INF/11).

2. Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation

43. The Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA)[6] has been developed to remedy the lack of international coordination in research on climate change vulnerability, impacts and adaptation. It identifies research gaps and initiates processes to close them, and is responding to the scientific community's call for a more cohesive and coordinated approach to vulnerability, impact and adaptation research, and the critical need to harmonize, mobilize, and communicate the growing knowledge-base related to this issue. UNEP took the initiative to establish PROVIA and currently provides it with secretariat support. PROVIA serves a new and growing network of scientists, practitioners and decision-makers, working towards identifying research gaps and meeting policy needs in climate change vulnerability, impact and adaptation research, in collaboration with its implementing partners.

44. Two milestone publications were released in 2013. The first is entitled *Research Priorities on Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation: Responding to the Climate Change Challenge*.[7] The analytical content of this work is based on a broad range of sources, including the IPCC Working Group reports, peer-reviewed articles, books, white papers and conference, workshop, and meeting proceedings, presentations and notes. The second publication, *The PROVIA Guidance on Assessing Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation to Climate Change*,[8] sets out the revised guidelines and assessment tools that need to be delivered to Governments, international agencies and individual experts. The publications were presented to Governments and other principal stakeholders on a number of occasions, including at three side events during the nineteenth session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Warsaw from 11 to 22 November 2013.

45. At its sixty-fifth session, held in Geneva from 15 to 23 May 2013, the Executive Council of the World Meteorological Organization approved PROVIA as a component of the World Climate Programme (WCP).[9] PROVIA and the other components of WCP will thus contribute to the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services. Accordingly, PROVIA was first considered by the WMO Executive Council Working Group on Climate and Related Weather, Water and Environmental Matters at its session from 10 to 12 December 2013.

46. Strengthening communication within the research community and among adaptation planners is one of the priorities of PROVIA. To that end, PROVIA publishes a quarterly newsletter and maintains a regularly updated website. PROVIA will co-host the third International Climate Change Adaptation Conference in Fortaleza Ceará, Brazil, in May 2014. Further information on may be found in the note by the secretariat on PROVIA (UNEP/EA.1/INF/12).

3. GEMS/Water programme and network

47. "The future we want" emphasizes the urgent need to address water quality and water pollution. Water quality and water pollution issues feature prominently among the proposals for the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. In this context and in the light of global trends, attention is drawn to the growing need for informed decision-making on water-related risks and their social, economic and welfare-related implications.

---

[6] See www.unep.org/provia/HOME/tabid/55173/Default.aspx.

[7] See www.unep.org/provia/RESOURCES/Publications/ResearchPriorities/tabid/130750/Default.aspx.

[8] See www.unep.org/provia/RESOURCES/Publications/PROVIAGuidancereport/tabid/130752/Default.aspx.

[9] Resolution 4.3(2)/1 (EC-65).

48. The GEMS/Water programme provides a global platform for water quality data and information as a central element of the UNEP operational strategy for fresh water (2012–2016). Supported primarily by Environment Canada, up to 31 March 2014, GEMS/Water has provided crucial evidence-based information on global inland water quality, current status and trends. The Irish and German Governments have undertaken to co-host the new GEMS/Water programme. The Government of Brazil has expressed a firm interest in setting up a regional hub for Latin America and the Caribbean and for Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa.

49. As GEMS/Water is metamorphosing into a new business and governance model, its primary objectives are, first, enhancing the global network of countries and institutions committed to providing water-quality-related data and information; second, improving products and services such as decision-support tools, inclusive knowledge management, and multi-scale assessments in national, regional and transboundary domains; third, facilitating the integration of multiple datasets from different sources, including remote sensing and citizens science; fourth, providing science-based policy-relevant information; and, fifth, enhancing water-quality-related capacity development.

50. The implementation of the GEMS/Water programme will provide benefits for member States and the global water community at various levels. National and regional institutions will benefit from capacity development activities and technical advice and support. Decision-making will be better informed, based on robust information leading to social, economic and environmental benefits from more targeted water management. At the global level, GEMS/Water will contribute significantly to the potential inclusion of the implementation of water quality and water-pollution-related targets in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

51. Further information on GEMS/Water may be found in the note by the secretariat (UNEP/EA.1/INF/13).

IV. Technology support and capacity-building

A. Increasing demands from member States

52. In paragraph 278, "The future we want" calls for the continued and focused implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, and, in paragraph 88 (f), for reaffirms the mandate and catalytic role of UNEP to continue providing technology support and capacity-building to assist developing countries, particularly in the context of a strengthened and upgraded UNEP. In paragraph 85 (l) the document calls for action to enhance evidence-based decision-making at all levels and contribute to strengthening ongoing efforts of capacity-building for data collection and analysis in developing countries.

53. Increasingly, UNEP is being called upon to support countries in implementing best practices for the regular monitoring and use of data and indicators for environmental reporting. The findings of GEO-5 and many UNEP-led assessments repeatedly highlight the lack of the data and indicators necessary for the assessment of the status of the world environmental situation and for Governments to be able to report on the achievement of agreed goals and environmental agreements. UNEP is taking what might be termed a "collect once, use often" approach as part of the UNEP Live initiative to identify and promote the use of appropriate data and indicators useful for multiple reporting purposes, in an effort to streamline and reduce the reporting burdens experienced by member States.

B. UNEP Live: technology support and capacity-building

54. In decision 27/11, the Governing Council calls upon UNEP to undertake and encourage capacity-building activities to ensure that developing countries and countries with economies in transition are able to work with UNEP Live and contribute to scientifically sound evidence-based environmental assessment processes. In the same decision it also invites member States, major groups and stakeholders and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to engage in the development of UNEP Live and in particular the implementation of the online state-of-environment reporting capabilities, by increasingly sharing relevant data, information and indicators through open platforms.

55. Member States at the Interregional Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Bridgetown from 26 to 28 August 2013, included in the so-called "zero draft" of the meeting's outcome document a call for a data revolution in small island developing States, to enable the effective follow-up and evaluation of implementation and to indicate the level of success in attainment of internationally agreed development goals. Among other things, the meeting called for the strengthening of data systems and partnership initiatives, for ownership of data and information to remain the property of the Governments of small island developing States within those regions, called for support in different areas from the United Nations Statistics Division,

UNEP and other United Nations bodies, and called on the international community to assist in the establishment of national and regional information and communication technology platforms and information dissemination hubs in the small island developing States to facilitate information exchange and cooperation between such States, linked with platforms such as the network SIDSNet.

56. As a first step, UNEP, in collaboration with the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), is developing an online national reporting toolkit to help Governments collect, analyse and publish environmental information quickly and easily. The toolkit is currently being tested and a pilot version will be available by mid-2014.

C. New and updated support tools

57. Support is being provided to countries in the West Asia region in the development of national environment outlooks through training in the conduct of integrated environmental assessments and facilitating the development of frameworks for state-of-the-environment reports. The *IEA Resource Book for the Arab Region* was published on the internet in both Arabic and English.

58. In cooperation with the League of Arab States, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and the Abu Dhabi Global Environment Data Initiative (AGEDI), UNEP has launched online guidelines on the core set of sustainable development indicators for the Arab region, in Arabic and English. To remedy the lack of such indicators, the guidelines show how to develop and use social, environmental and economic indicators for the Arab region.

59. In October 2013, at its thirty-seventh plenary session, held in Batumi, Georgia, IPCC adopted two reports of its task force on national greenhouse gas inventories, namely the 2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands[10] and the 2013 Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidance Arising from the Kyoto Protocol.[11] The former provides countries with additional national-level inventory methodological guidance on wetlands to address the gaps identified in the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. The latter responds to an invitation by the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to review and, if necessary, update supplementary methodologies for estimating anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks resulting from land use, land-use change and forestry activities.

60. Technical assistance and capacity-building support were provided to Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Pakistan and Pacific States using the integrated environmental assessment approach (as set out in the *IEA Training Manual*) to review environmental states and trends and their impacts on human well-being and economic development, with a view to supporting informed decision-making processes at the national level in 2012–2013.

[10] See www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/home/wetlands.html.

[11] See /www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/home/2013KPSupplementaryGuidance_inv.html.